



State of Wisconsin
Department of Public Instruction
Elizabeth Burmaster, State Superintendent

*** NEWS RELEASE ***

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Ten 'Standing Up' awards recognize collaborative efforts in rural schools, libraries, and communities

Second annual awards ceremony held in state Capitol

MADISON—State Superintendent Elizabeth Burmaster presented “Standing Up for Rural Wisconsin Schools, Libraries, and Communities Awards” during a ceremony Friday at the state Capitol in Madison.

The awards recognize partnerships that provide a strong, solid foundation for educating children and enriching rural communities throughout the state. “These awards recognize the hard work, innovative programs, and collaborative efforts of our schools, libraries, and communities in rural Wisconsin,” Burmaster said. “The good work being done in our small rural communities is shaping the lives of our children as well as the future of this great state.”

This was the second year that Burmaster presented “Standing Up for Rural Wisconsin Schools, Libraries, and Communities Awards.” Projects receiving recognition were

Fire and Ice, the highly acclaimed show choir at Washburn High School, for its 13-year history of exceptional musical and theatrical performances. Receiving the award was **Judy Schlobohm**, who founded Fire and Ice to provide 45 students each year with the opportunity to develop strong singing voices, dance skills, stage presence, stagecraft, leadership skills, teamwork, and self-confidence. Parents and other community members support Fire and Ice by fund-raising, making costumes, building and transporting sets, and other tasks. Fire and Ice is a source of local pride with its annual concerts attracting hundreds from Washburn and surrounding communities.

Freedom Food Pantry, a partnership between the food pantry and Freedom FFA, for distributing about five tons of food annually in the Freedom area. Over the past four years, the FFA has assisted with collecting, weighing, sorting, bagging, and distributing food products to citizens who are in need of assistance. The FFA provides leadership and direct labor support for this broad community-wide effort. Additionally, an FFA student member serves on the Freedom Food Pantry Board to help ensure strong and active ties between the school and the community organization. Accepting the award were **Kevin Champeau**, **Paul Larson**, and students, **Tiffany Schuh** and **Cassie Vande Hey**.

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Grandview Summer Academy, sponsored by the Pecatonica Education Charitable Foundation in collaboration with the Pecatonica and Dodgeville school districts and the University of Wisconsin-Platteville, for summer arts enrichment classes taught by community residents and teachers from neighboring school districts. The 2006 Summer Academy offered 19 classes in subjects such as stained glass, portraiture, wool sculpture, felting, origami, sun-painting, and ceramics, linking students with community members in a collaborative teaching and learning situation. Participating students received summer school credit, and university-level students were eligible for credit through a cooperative effort with UW-Platteville. The academy has helped to build a broader sense of community in the area while boosting the artistic and cultural character of the entire region. Accepting the award were **Jane Balch, Beth Ptak, Marilyn Rolfsmeyer, Ruth Rolfsmeyer, Ricky Rolfsmeyer, Amy Thronson**, and student, **Cora Demler**.

High Five After-School Program at Spooner Elementary School for services to nearly 130 students. Established during the 2005-06 school year by Karen Collins, an AmeriCorps VISTA volunteer, the after-school program links efforts of the Boy Scouts, 4-H, Lakeland Family Resource Center, University of Wisconsin-Extension, Washburn County, and other programs. The High Five After-School Program has involved 10 high school students, 32 community members, and 22 senior citizens, volunteering for the Senior Tax Exchange Program. The High Five After-School Program resulted in improved academic achievement and self-esteem among student participants and increased community and parent involvement in the school. Accepting the award were **Karen Collins** and **Jane Eaton**.

Kinship of Tomahawk, a non-profit organization in the Tomahawk School District, for promoting mentoring activities by establishing high-quality relationships among individuals. Since 1997, *Kinship* has matched 130 individuals or couples with a child between the ages of 5 and 15. The school-based *Friends* program has worked with groups of 20 matched students each year: fourth- and fifth-grade students who are matched with high school students. Accepting the award were **Gladi Felser, Kay Glodowski, Patti Hilgendorfs, Mary Ingman**, and **Scott Swenty**.

Nicolet Distance Education Network (NDEN), a collaborative partnership linking 11 rural PK-12 school districts and the Nicolet Area Technical College, for providing expanded access to high-quality educational programs and other learning opportunities for students and residents in the region. The network provides a combination of high school courses, adult education, and specialized K-8 programming in partnership with various external organizations. It also provides alternative education, professional development, and other programming opportunities for service area residents. Accepting the award were **Storm Carroll, Beth Dailey, Don Holmen, Virginia Metzdorf, Tom Moris, Michele Nichols, Linda Parker, Al Prosser**, and **Billie Earl Sparks**.

Partnership with Reedsville Manor, a partnership between the district and the assisted living complex for elderly citizens, for helping cognitively disabled students learn life skills while building community connections. In the summer of 2005, with Reedsville Village Board approval, teacher Anna Stockman rented an apartment at Reedsville Manor to serve as a classroom to teach independent-living skills. While learning to accomplish life tasks for themselves, students visit with the residents, help to clean rooms, and participate in birthday parties and other celebrations, supporting the very essence of community outreach and forging many strong linkages among students and residents. Accepting the award were **Carrie LeMahieu, Candy Rathsak, Dan Sonnenberg**, and **Anna Stockman**. Six students also attended the awards program.

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Science, Technology, and Agriculture Classes of the Bayfield School District, a partnership among the district, Red Cliff Band of Lake Superior Chippewa, University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point, and other organizations, for providing 150 high school students with high-quality learning experiences in the areas of science, technology, and agriculture. The science program includes rigorous coursework as well as science mentors who help expand learning for elementary students. In addition, the courses provide opportunities to apply scientific concepts through hands-on projects such as building toothpick bridges, electric cars, and inventions sufficient to win state, regional, and national contests. The agriculture program connects local growers to the school, fosters entrepreneurial skills, and sustains the workforce for local industries. The aquaculture program is revitalizing the Red Cliff fisheries. Accepting the award were **Robert Kent** and **Fred Schlichting**.

Summer Activities in the Park, a cooperative effort by the Jane Morgan Memorial Library and the Cambria Kiwanis Club, for offering a series of noon-time activities for children at Cambria's Tarrant Lake Park. Activities over the past four years have ranged from outside games, theatrical performances, and crafts, to various educational exhibits and presentations. During 2006, the program reached more than 260 students and 80 adults, providing an opportunity to socialize, to keep the park vital and alive, and instill a sense of community. Accepting the award were **Judy Barden, Bob Bergum, Cheryl Bergum, Lois Frank, Jayne Grahm, Katie Helmer, Sarah Lloyd, Leonore Neumann, Jeanne Radke, and Joanne Sanderson**.

Turtle Playscape Project, a community-based, service-learning project, for constructing a new school and community playscape with a "turtle" unifying theme. The project began with Argyle students attending a leadership-training program offered by Wisconsin Rural Challenge to gain the knowledge, inspiration, and skills to tackle a community-based project. With the help of a Wisconsin Rural Challenge grant, students initiated a community-wide planning process that led to the design and construction of a new playscape on school property adjacent to a village park. The project linked the Argyle School District's art and science departments and the Argyle Charter School with the community, involving students, parents, and community leaders from throughout the village. Accepting the award were **Mary Barr, Gary Harris, Marilyn Rolfsmeyer, James Schramer**, and students, **Shaunna Allen, David Cueavis, and Chris James**.

Burmester concluded the program, commending individuals and organizations working on the various projects for their tremendous contributions to Wisconsin's rural communities. "Your efforts, no matter how large or small, reverberate throughout our communities and will have lasting effects for our children today and the generations to follow," she said.

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